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RUEANAT/NASA HQ WASHDC
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RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL
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SIPDIS

DEPT PASS USAID TO LAC/RSD, LAC/SAM, G/ENV, PPC/ENV
TREASURY FOR USED IBRD AND IDB AND INTL/MDB
USDA FOR FOREST SERVICE: LIZ MAHEW
INTERIOR FOR DIR INT AFFAIRS: K WASHBURN
INTERIOR FOR FWS: TOM RILEY
INTERIOR FOR NPS: JONATHAN PUTNAM
INTERIOR PASS USGS FOR INTERNATIONAL: J WEAVER
EPA FOR INTERNATIONAL: CAM HILL-MACON
USDA FOR ARS/INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH: G FLANLEY
NSF FOR INTERNATIONAL: HAROLD STOLBERG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [XR](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: USG SPONSORED WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND GLACIAL MELT
IN THE ANDES RESULTS IN ADAPTION RECOMMENDATIONS

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11. SUMMARY. In July 2009, a USAID and NSF-sponsored workshop brought together U.S. and Peruvian experts on climate change impacts on highland mountain zones and they identified six major weaknesses impeding the development and implementation of adaptation strategies. These weaknesses included the lack of adequate information on climate change and water resources in Peru and the lack of funding for mid and long term adaptation strategies. USAID/Peru has committed USD 1 million to implement over the next three years some of the recommendations made by the working groups formed at this workshop. END SUMMARY.

12. The recession of tropical glaciers has an enormous impact on the Andean hydrologic cycle, a situation that raises grave concerns for future water resources - especially in Peru where 70% of the population lives on the Pacific coast and only 2% of the country's water supply is available. The anticipated increase and risk of increased flooding, catastrophic events, and loss of water storage will likely force major changes upon Andean communities. In response, USAID sponsored an international, multidisciplinary, inter-sectoral, and university-based workshop in Lima and Huaraz, Peru, entitled "Adapting to a World without Glaciers." This workshop was designed to facilitate discussion among scientists, practitioners, and policy makers about climate change vulnerabilities and risks; catalyze thinking that formulates innovative approaches that facilitate adaptation to changing environmental and climatic conditions; and identify priority research, collaboration, and action needs. Besides USAID (Washington and Peru), the workshop was also supported by the National Science Foundation, the International Resources Group (IRG), The Mountain Institute, University of Georgia, Catholic University of Peru, Peru's Science and Technology Council (CONCYTEC), and Peru's Ministry of Environment.

13. Throughout the workshop (July 7-15, 2009) recommendations and concrete plans for future collaborative research and development projects between U.S. and Peruvian scientists were elaborated and prioritized through dialogue with government officials and Peruvian researchers. USAID/Peru committed to investing USD 1 million over the next three years to implement the research and action priorities recommended throughout this workshop.

14. The workshop was a rare opportunity to increase collaborative exchange between U.S. scientists and Peruvian researchers on challenges related to climate change adaptation, water resources management, biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, and agricultural practices.

RESEARCH PROPOSALS

15. The workshop created three working groups that dealt with: water and hazards, ecosystem and biodiversity, and agriculture. Proposals for research on the processes and impacts of climate change in Peru's water sector include: 1) determining (natural and artificial) water availability; 2) determining current and future uses of water; and 3) evaluating past and current water management practices. For ecosystems and biodiversity, research priorities are: 1) identifying vulnerable communities and areas; 2) understanding how people value biodiversity and ecosystems from a cultural and economic perspective and study interactions between human and biophysical systems; and 3) understanding social, cultural, economic, and environmental links between high and lowlands. For the agricultural sector, research needs include: 1) evaluating changes in land use, vegetation cover, and productive ecosystems due to climate change; 2) recovering and reassessing traditional knowledge on climate change, with representation of the country's cultural diversity; and 3) evaluating current and potential capacities of sub-basins as suppliers of environmental services. These recommendations will inform the development of a research agenda by CONCYTEC and may lead

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to further research support from the US National Science Foundation.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

16. Priority actions for climate change adaptation in Peru's water sector are: 1) develop and strengthen platforms for participation and decision-making by stakeholders in the water basins; 2) capacity building and information exchange for participation and decision-making; and 3) education, communication, and information dissemination (i.e. improve communication and education on climate change). With respect to ecosystems and biodiversity, suggested priority actions are: 1) biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and management; 2) strengthen public awareness on impact of climate change on ecosystems and biodiversity; and 3) improve, implement, and develop new policies and environmental laws with respect to biodiversity conservation and environmental services. For the agricultural sector, suggested priorities are: 1) strengthen governmental institutions - namely the ministries of Environment (MINAM) and Agriculture (MINAG), Meteorology and Hydrology Service (SENAMHI), Agricultural Research Institution (INIA), and Agricultural Health Service (SENASA) - in order to carry out more effective actions in response to climate change; 2) develop and implement a National Program for Intercultural Education on Climate Change; and 3) elaborate and implement mechanisms for the mandatory payment of environmental services. These recommendations will inform the follow on work sponsored by USAID/Peru.

BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ADAPTION STRATEGIES

17. Six main points that impede the development and the implementation of strategies to adapt to these changes were identified throughout the event: 1) Lack of sufficient information and research on climate change and water (e.g. studies on paleoclimate and climate history); 2) weak institutional structure in Peru in general and in the agricultural sector in particular (i.e. lack of cooperation between governmental agencies and need for a governmental, multisectoral data base on climate change); 3) gap between society in general and indigenous and native communities

(i.e. difficulty in incorporating traditional knowledge into official strategies for climate change adaptation); 4) indigenous and native populations are losing control over their natural resources and their capacity to manage their territories (i.e. increased dependence on outside organizations); 5) gap between the scientific community, decision makers, and society as a whole (e.g. data is seldom shared publicly and free of charge); and 6) lack of funding for mid and long term adaptation strategies.

18. Peru is currently developing a series of initiatives that will strengthen the country's capacity to support research on climate change and implement actions to adapt to these changes. Some highlights are the creation of a Ministry of Environment, the elaboration of a new law for water resource management and risk management, and growing interest of local authorities in incorporating environmental policies into their regions. The existence of national protected areas and the country's current attempt to motivate the creation of private protected areas strengthen Peru's capacity to conserve biodiversity. NOTE: During his speech at the event, Minister of Environment Antonio Brack, highlighted the need for international researchers working in Peru to share information with Peruvian entities and increased participation from local communities in decision-making. The new water resources management law was criticized by other event participants for not involving local communities in its elaboration and for looking at Peru as a homogeneous country (which it is not). END NOTE.

19. COMMENT. This USAID-funded workshop and the commitment by

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USAID/Peru to support follow up activities have visibly demonstrated the USG's interest in and concern about the impact of receding glaciers in the Andes. This environmental problem represents a major challenge to the region for the millions that depend on the glaciers for the water supply. END COMMENT.

SOBEL